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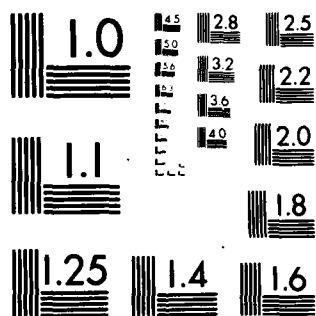
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February 6, 1980

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ABSTRACT

"Modes of Political Participation in Revolutionary Cuba"

by

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→ The study of political participation has traditionally focussed almost exclusively upon developed western politics. Participation in under-developed nations was presumed to be restricted to elites, and participation in communist systems was regarded as "inauthentic." Recent studies have challenged these views and called for research to empirically establish the extent and effects of participation in non-western systems. This article is a study of political participation in revolutionary Cuba which utilizes the conceptual apparatus developed by Nie and Verba's cross-national studies. After reviewing the conceptual and methodological problems of applying this framework to the Cuban case, the article attempts to ascertain: (1) the main participatory acts that Cubans engage in, and whether particular modes of participation can be identified; (2) how many Cubans avail themselves of various participatory opportunities; (3) what effect mass participation has on the political system; and (4) how these facets of political participation have evolved since 1959. ←

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The study of political participation has traditionally focussed almost exclusively on participation in developed western nations. Participation in underdeveloped countries has been presumed to be restricted to political elites, except for periodic outbursts of mass violence (Seligson and Booth, 1976). Participation in communist countries, on the other hand, has been acknowledged as being widespread, but it has been regarded as coerced, ineffective, and therefore inauthentic (Hough, 1975; Little, 1976). A number of recent studies (Seligson and Booth, 1976; Hough, 1976; Salisbury, 1975) have challenged this conventional wisdom as ethnocentric, and have called for research to establish empirically the extent and effects of political participation in non-western settings. This study is an examination of political participation in revolutionary Cuba which attempts to ascertain: (1) how the revolutionary leadership has conceived of the role mass participation should play in the revolutionary process; (2) what opportunities to participate in politics exist for the mass public in Cuba; (3) how many Cubans avail themselves of these opportunities; and (4) what effect mass participation has on the political process.

Cross-national studies by Verba, Nie, and their collaborators (Verba, Nie, and Kim, 1971; Verba and Nie, 1972; Verba, et al, 1973) have demonstrated that political participation is a more complex phenomenon than the prevalent uni-dimensional conceptions of it had allowed. They identify various "modes" of political participation, and by showing that these modes cannot be scaled hierarchically they establish that participation is multi-dimensional. Modes of participation are distinctive ways in which citizens relate to the government (Verba and Nie, 1972; 44-45), and they are distinguished by the degree of initiative required from the participant, the degree of conflict liable to be engendered with other participants, and the scope of the intended outcome (personal or community-wide).

Four modes of participation have been identified cross-nationally (Verba et al, 1973: 237): voting, campaign activity; personal contacting of government officials; and communal activity (i.e., non-electoral activity by which citizens try to influence community policy). In Yugoslavia, another mode—self-management activity—has been identified (Verba et al, 1973), and in Costa Rica, Booth (1976) found evidence of two additional modes: political communication and community improvement activism.

Our study of political participation in Cuba will utilize a modified version of the conceptual schema developed by Verba et al (1973) in their study of Yugoslavia, since it is the only communist polity in which this sort of research has been conducted. In Yugoslavia, four modes of political participation were identified: voting; contacting; communal activity; and self-management activity. Participatory acts which, in other nations, formed the mode of campaign activity, were found not to constitute a distinctive mode in Yugoslavia. Since the Cuban electoral process prohibits campaigning, there is no campaign activity mode there either.

In addition to these four modes, our study of Cuba will also consider the mode of supportive activity. Most studies of political participation concentrate solely on activity aimed at influencing the policy process. Participation is defined as behavior through which the populace articulates its interests and makes demands on the political system. Verba and Nie (1972:2), for instance, define participation as "those activities that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the actions they take." However, as Salisbury (1975) points out, this is an unnecessarily narrow conception of participation. Behavior which is supportive rather than demanding can have implications which are as important for policy implementation as demand participation is for policy formation.

Supportive participation (i.e., behavior in which people carry out policies) constitutes a political resource, and its absence can be a serious constraint on policy-makers. If a given policy initiative is premised upon eliciting supportive participation, the success of the policy will depend upon the extent to which such participation is forthcoming. Consequently, supportive participation is deserving of investigation, and our study of Cuba will construe participation broadly to include supportive as well as demand participation.

Unconventional participation (e.g., strikes, demonstrations, revolts, etc.) will not be considered because adequate data is not available and because the evidence that does exist indicates that such activity has been of only minor consequence in Cuba since the early 1960's.

Unlike the Verba and Nie studies, which are based upon individuals' responses to survey instruments, the Cuban data is entirely aggregate. Data on the number of people engaged in various participatory acts is relatively plentiful, but individual level data is non-existent. This places several limitations on the study. Our conceptual schema of modes, though it has found empirical verification in other contexts, must be regarded in this instance simply as a means of organizing the available data rather than as a testable hypothesis about the structure of political participation in Cuba. Without survey data, it is impossible to verify that participatory acts in Cuba do, in fact, cluster together in the modes we have postulated. Our categorization of participatory acts as belonging to one mode or another will follow the categorizations found in Verba's study of Yugoslavia (Verba, et al, 1973).

The aggregate character of the data also prevents any assessment of the degree to which some people participate in a wider variety of activities

than do others. Nevertheless, the data is sufficient to establish the extent of participation in a wide variety of activities, and to do so using a conceptual framework that has been found to be applicable cross-nationally.

The Role of Participation in a Revolutionary Ideology

Promoting mass political participation has always been a key aspect of the revolutionary leadership's plans for building socialism and communism in Cuba. Participation is regarded as indispensable to achieving both the objective conditions (economic development) and the subjective conditions (new socialist man) for a revolutionary transformation of Cuban society. As Fagen (1969: 7) writes, "A primary aim of political socialization in Cuba is to produce a participating citizen, not just one who can recite the revolutionary catechism perfectly. The test of the new Cuban man is how he behaves." Nevertheless, the particulars of precisely how Cuban citizens ought to participate in the revolutionary process and the actual opportunities available for participation have changed considerably over time.

The earliest concern of the revolutionary government was to organize and mobilize the population to support the new regime and to protect it from both internal and external threats. While the revolutionary government enjoyed widespread popular support after the collapse of the old regime (Free, 1960; Zeitlin, 1970), few people had actively participated in the struggle against Batista (Bonachea and San Martin, 1974). Moreover, there was no organizational vehicle to convert attitudinal support into behavioral support. Initially, then, the principal form of mass participation was the mass rally. Dozens of such rallies, with tens of thousands in attendance, were held in the first few years of the revolution, and they were an important factor in the struggle between left and right wings of the anti-Batista coalition. The inability of the right to mobilize mass support as could the left

contributed significantly to the right's feelings of political isolation and impotence (Thomas, 1971: 1232-3, 1246-7).

The first formally organized vehicle for mass participation was the Militia, created in late 1959. At its peak in the mid-sixties, the Militia included half a million armed civilians, drawn largely from the working class (Blutstein et al, 1971: 454). It constituted an important supplement to the military might of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (as demonstrated at the Bay of Pigs), and also acted as a politico-military counter-weight to the armed forces. Since the mid-sixties, however, the status of the Militia has been reduced to that of a civil defense force and military reserve; it is no longer a significant vehicle of mass participation in politics.

The conception of how Cuban citizens ought to participate in politics and the range of participatory opportunities available have been inextricably linked to the revolutionary leadership's conception of socialist democracy. Throughout the 1960's, the concept of "direct democracy" predominated. This conception rested upon several distinct premises: (1) that the essence of democracy is the pursuit of policies which serve the interests of the people; (2) that democracy requires the active support of the people through their direct participation in the implementation of public policy; and (3) that a direct, informal, and non-institutional relationship between the people and their leaders is sufficient to ensure governmental responsiveness to popular needs and demands.

In practice, direct democracy meant that virtually all organized political participation was supportive activity. Fagan (1969: 9) refers to this activity as mobilization participation and describes it aptly as "a matter of enlisting supportive hands in the service of national goals...Mobilization as used here means 'getting the troops out' to do whatever the leadership feels needs to be done." With the exception of the brief interlude of Local

Power (1966-1968), which has been described elsewhere (LeoGrande, 1976), there were no formal channels through which Cuban citizens could participate in policy formation or elite selection during the 1960's.

There was one informal way, however. Fidel Castro's numerous inspection tours throughout the countryside constituted the principal opportunity for the Cuban people to communicate with their leaders and thereby to exert some influence over policy. Frequent, usually unannounced, and always informal, these visits were an integral part of direct democracy. "No one could accuse him," wrote Hugh Thomas (1971: 1345), "As Fanon in The Wretched of the Earth did so many leaders of new states, of retiring to the palace and never visiting the country. On the contrary, Castro never seemed to be in the capital, always travelling by helicopter, or jeep, or Oldsmobile, always looking at some new project, always speaking, encouraging, threatening, denouncing, never indifferent."

In his travels, Castro gave the ordinary Cuban direct access to the center of governmental power—himself. He would often spend hours with small groups of people discussing local problems, ordering action to solve the problems, or explaining why the problems were unsolvable. Not infrequently, he would take the side of the citizenry against abuses or inefficiency by local officials. Castro personally came to be regarded as a more reliable bulwark against governmental irregularity than any set of structural safeguards.

Gonzalez (1974: 184) writes:

As the personal link between the rulers and the ruled... Castro also supplied an element of regime responsiveness to popular pressures. Constantly making personal inspection tours throughout the length and breadth of the island, he functioned, in effect, as an ombudsman for the populace. Only he possessed the singular ability to redress local grievances in a political system that had yet to develop truly responsive (as opposed to command) institutions. By the same token, he served as the regime's intuitive barometer of popular sentiment, sounding out public opinion and eliciting criticisms from among the rank and file regarding the performance of local party and government officials in the management of

Since direct democracy placed such emphasis on direct personal mass-elite relationships, institutional mechanisms for mass participation in policy-making or to ensure elite accountability, were virtually non-existent.

The Cuban conception of democracy underwent substantial revision in the reorganization of the political system which began in 1970. The failure of the economic policies of the late 1960's, culminating in the failure to produce ten million tons of sugar in 1970, was a severe blow to the prestige of the revolution. These failures prompted a reassessment not only of economic policy, but also of the political system which had allowed such mistakes to be made. The problems in the economy were blamed, in part, on the weakness of Cuban political institutions and on the lack of popular participation in the formation of public policy (Castro, 1970a). To remedy these failings, a total reorganization of the political system was initiated, a reorganization aimed at "institutionalization" (i.e., strengthening the institutional structure of the political process) and "democratization" (i.e., increasing mass participation in policy decision-making). This new phase of the Cuban revolution marked a shift away from the precepts of direct democracy, and the recognition that more than supportive participation was required for building socialism:

The people must be given the opportunity to decide the persons to whom they delegate their power and, moreover, the channels should be established through which every member of society may, to the greatest extent possible, participate directly in the governing of that society, in the administration of that society (Granma Weekly Review, 1974a: 10).

In practice, this has meant an expansion of political participation and participatory opportunities beyond the narrow bounds of supportive activity which, during the 1960's, constituted by far the greatest part of political participation in Cuba.

Political Participation in Cuba in the 1970's

In every political system, legitimate forms of political participation are channelled through and structured by political institutions. In Cuba, there are three major institutional channels providing opportunities for citizens to participate in politics: the mass organizations, the Communist Party, and the elected governmental assemblies.

Like all socialist countries, Cuba has a variety of mass organizations which organize people on the basis of common characteristics such as age, occupation, and gender. Four of these stand out as being, by far, the most important: the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (Comités de Defensa de la Revolución—CDR); the Confederation of Cuban Workers (Confederación de Trabajadores de Cuba—CTC); the Federation of Cuban Women (Federación de Mujeres Cubanas—FMC); and the National Association of Small Farmers (Asociación Nacional de Agricultores Pequeños—ANAP). Together, these four organizations constitute the most important mechanism through which Cuban citizens participate in politics. The activities comprising three of the five modes of participation under consideration (supportive activity, communal activity, and self-management activity) occur largely under the rubric of these mass organizations.

During the 1960's, the mass organizations constituted virtually the only channel through which Cubans could participate, and the activity of these organizations was then concentrated primarily on mobilizing people for supportive activities. This emphasis characterized all the mass organizations from their inception: the CDR was created to mobilize supporters to defend the regime against internal opponents; the CTC was reoriented in 1961 to mobilize workers to raise productivity and thereby to accelerate economic development; the FMC was created to mobilize women to participate in all the various activities of the revolution; and the ANAP was organized

to mobilize support among small private farmers. Indeed, the Cubans themselves portrayed the mass organizations as instruments of mass mobilization. "In order to organize and mobilize the masses," said party official Jorge Risquet in 1963, "...The Party depends upon the mass organizations, which are like its arms and legs," (Risquet, 1963). Not until the political reorganization of the 1970's was the role of the mass organizations expanded to allow for any significant input to the policy-making process.

Today, the mass organizations are still the main vehicle for political participation. Mass organization membership is so extensive that virtually everyone belongs to at least one mass organization, and a majority of Cubans belong to at least two. Since their reorganization in 1961, the trade unions have had a membership of over 2 million, or more than 80% of the state sector work force (Castro, 1976: 188). Similarly, the Farmers' Association has included nearly all small private farm owners since its inception in 1961; present membership stands at 232,000, or about 85% of private farmers and the members of their families (Castro, 1976: 193; Mesa-Lago, 1976: 283). The memberships of the CDR and FMC have grown more slowly. After burgeoning rapidly in the first two years of their existence (1960-1962), they settled into a fairly steady rate of expansion of about 15% per year. This continued into the early 1970's at which time membership in both organizations peaked at what appears to be a saturation point of 80% of the eligible populations. At present, the CDR has nearly 5 million members, and the FMC has over 2 million (Castro, 1976: 197, 201). Unlike the other mass organizations, the CDR is open not just to one social sector, but to anyone who supports the revolution. The CDR's goal is to incorporate the entire adult population into its ranks.

There is considerable social pressure to join a mass organization, thereby demonstrating that one is "integrated" into the revolution—i.e.,

that one is a supporter and a participant. Consequently, membership figures probably overstate the number of citizens who are actually participants in any mass organization activities. Intense organizational efforts to mobilize the entire membership of a mass organization (e.g., to elect delegates to a national Congress, or to discussion drafts of important legislation) typically result in a participation rate of about 85% (e.g., Granma Weekly Review, 1968t:8; 1974b:3; Castro, 1976: 192). At the other extreme are those members who participate a great deal. Such members are referred to as "activists" and comprise 19% of the CDR's membership, and 16% of the FMC's (Granma Weekly Review, 1970: 3; 1975: 6).

The specific tasks undertaken by the mass organizations have been as diverse as they have been numerous, changing considerably over time as the national goals and policies of the regime have evolved. As memberships have expanded, the mass organizations have taken on a larger number and a wider variety of tasks.

Participatory opportunities available through the mass organizations fall primarily into the modes of supportive and communal activity. Both modes are extremely variegated and the constraint of space prohibits a full listing of all the participatory acts that comprise them. The three most important types of supportive activity, though, are voluntary labor campaigns (usually in agriculture at harvest time), work on community improvement projects (such as adult education, public health classes, vaccination campaigns, blood donation drives, school improvements, etc.), and socialist emulation. Since different individuals devote their time to different projects, it is extremely difficult to estimate how many people are participating in these supportive activities taken together, although it appears to be a majority of the membership. For example, a non-comprehensive listing of FMC members engaged in various activities in 1975 yielded a total of over a million

participants (Granma Weekly Review, 1975: 6).

Communal activity is defined as non-electoral behavior aimed at influencing policy, especially within the community. Much of the communal activity engaged in by Cubans involves internal decisions about how the mass organizations will conduct their various work programs. At the base level, branches of the mass organizations have considerable autonomy to organize their own programs of work and to elect their officers (Fagan, 1972). Candidates for leadership positions in the mass organizations at the local level are nominated by the membership itself, with the requirement that there must always be at least two candidates for every position. The Communist Party is prohibited from either nominating or endorsing any candidate. After a discussion of the merits of the candidates, the membership votes (in the trade unions, at least, this vote is by secret ballot). One indicator of the effectiveness of this process is the very high turnover in mass organization leaders at the local level. For example, in the trade union elections of both 1966 and 1970, three-quarters of the candidates elected had not previously held leadership posts (Granma Weekly Review, 1966: 3; Mesa-Lago, 1974: 77). Participation in this electoral process varies somewhat from one mass organization to another. About 84% of the trade unions' membership participated in the 1966 elections, while only about 60% participated in the elections of 1970 (Granma Weekly Review, 1966: 3; Mesa-Lago, 1974: 77).

Mass organization members also have some opportunity to influence the work of their organizations at the national level. National plans of work are adopted at a mass organization's national congress. "Draft theses," i.e., a proposed work plan, circulates throughout the organization before the congress convenes so that the membership can discuss it and suggest changes. In addition, most national congress delegates are drawn from the base of the organization; local units elect delegates to congresses in the way that they elect local leaders.

The degree of influence these procedures actually give the membership over national work plans is debatable; no doubt the Communist Party and the national leadership of the mass organizations retain the ability to control this process. That, however, does not make participation by the general membership "inauthentic." The whole process is not merely a charade; rather, it is a way for the national leadership to assess the reactions of the membership to a program of work which depends for its success upon mass participation in its execution.

Mass organization members also have opportunities to influence policies outside the organizations themselves. The main mechanism for doing this is the mass discussion of draft laws. The process here is similar to the mass discussion of draft theses before a national congress, except that all the mass organizations are involved. Drafts of important legislation are discussed by mass organization members at the local level, suggested changes are solicited, and these changes are then communicated to the Council of Ministers for use in drawing up the final text of the law. In at least some cases, the suggestions that emerge from the discussion process have led to substantial revisions in the draft law. The mass discussions of draft legislation are typically attended by about 60-80% of the mass organizations' membership (Castro, 1976: 192; Granma Weekly Review, 1968a: 1).

Individual mass organizations also serve a "watch-dog" function in various settings. The trade unions are responsible for overseeing the behavior of plant managers, the CDR is responsible for maintaining a "patient advocate" service to assure proper treatment of people receiving medical services, and the FMC and CTC have created the "Women's Work Front" which is essentially a women's caucus within the trade unions. The Women's Work Front is responsible for seeing that the trade unions give proper attention to the concerns of working women.

Self-management activity in Cuba takes place almost entirely in the work place through the trade unions. While there were several experiments in worker self-management during the 1960's, they were largely ineffective. The trade unions, like the rest of the mass organizations devoted most of their energy to mobilizing supportive activity. In the late 1960's, the trade unions were replaced by the Advance Workers Movement—a cadre organization of the most productive workers in a plant. The function of the Advance Workers Movement was to spur production. At its peak, the Movement included only 450,000 workers, about 17% of the labor force (Mesa-Lago, 1974: 237). Thus the vast majority of workers had no mass organization of their own to represent their interests or through which they could participate in politics.

One conclusion of the post-1970 reassessment of the political system was that the replacement of the unions by the Advance Workers Movement had been a mistake (Castro, 1970b). Beginning in 1970 and culminating in 1973 with the 13th Congress of the CTC, the trade unions were rebuilt. The self-management activities now available stem largely from resolutions passed at the 13th Workers' Congress (CTC, 1973). Workers' participation in decision-making within the work place is exercised through three channels: production assemblies, Management Councils, and Work Councils. Through the production assemblies, which are meetings of a plant's entire work force, workers have the right to participate in decisions concerning production quotas, individual work norms, overtime, working hours, socialist emulation plans, voluntary labor mobilizations, etc.

Proposals passed at production meetings are not binding on the plant manager, but rejections of such proposals must be justified at the next production assembly. The assemblies are held at least every two months, though many work centers hold them more frequently. Zimbalist (1975: 20) reports that worker attendance at production meetings is between 80 and 100%

and that worker participation is "extensive and vocal." In interviews with Cuban workers, Pérez-Stable (1976: 40) found that 85.9% of her respondents said the workers must be consulted in enterprise management, 57.8% felt that workers' input through the production assemblies was influential, and 52.6% believed that the management had to respond to workers' proposals.

Management Councils offer an additional avenue for worker participation in plant administration. The Councils are composed of the plant administrator, his/her top assistants, elected trade union representatives, a representative of the Women's Work Front, and representatives of the Communist Party. The Management Councils do not have the power to overrule the plant manager, but all administrative matters must be brought before it for discussion. "From my interviews with administrators, Party representatives, union representatives, and workers," writes Zimbalist (1975: 19), "it seems that the workers' input at these meetings is quite significant."

The Work Councils, on the other hand, are comprised entirely of workers elected by their co-workers. These Councils handle all labor grievances, and their decisions are not subject to review by the plant management.

During the 1960's the only avenue for political participation besides the mass organizations was the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC). As a Leninist party, the PCC is a cadre party; membership is highly selective and limited to a very small portion of the population. Indeed, the Cuban party has been smaller than any other ruling communist party. In 1969, it had only 55,000 members, about .7% of the population (Green 1970: 76). In contrast, the next smallest ruling party (Albania), included 3.0% of the population. At present, after a decade of rapid expansion, the PCC has reached over 200,000 members, about 2.2% of the population (Castro, 1976: 234). Thus, the number of people participating in politics through the party has been and continues to be relatively small.

However, the PCC's unique method of selecting party members does provide the mass populace with at least some opportunity to participate in party affairs. Since 1962, PCC members have been chosen by the "mass method." Periodically, the workers in each plant meet to decide who among them deserves to be a party member. Nominations are made, discussed, and voted upon. Those who are approved are then recommended to the party for membership. If the party decides to accept these nominees, it must still return to the workers' assembly for ratification of the individuals' membership (Cuba Socialista, 1962: 129-132).

The Organs of People's Power

During the 1960's, all government officials in Cuba were appointed from above. There were no elections and there were no representative assemblies analogous to soviets in the USSR. This was consistent with the general absence of mechanisms for assuring elite accountability to the populace and it was consistent with the precepts of direct democracy. It meant, however, that the government institution provided no opportunities for mass political participation.

The shift away from direct democracy in the 1970's brought with it a thorough reorganization of the government and the initiation of "People's Power." Composed of elected delegates, these legislative assemblies constitute the primary organs of government at all levels of administration (municipal, provincial, and national), and all administrative agencies are, in theory, subordinate to them. After a two year pilot project in Matanzas province, Organs of People's Power were instituted nationwide in 1976.

The stated purpose for creating People's Power was to provide the citizenry with more opportunities to participate in policy formation and elite selection, especially at the local level (R. Castro, 1974). The delegates to

the municipal assemblies are directly elected by the general populace. These delegates, in turn, elect the members of the provincial and national assemblies.

The electoral process for municipal delegates is complex, but is worth discussing at length. Municipalities are divided into electoral districts called "circumscriptions." Each circumscription sends one delegate to the municipal assembly. Circumscriptions are divided into neighborhoods, each of which runs one candidate for the delegate seat of the circumscription in which the neighborhood is located. A mass meeting of all eligible voters is held in each neighborhood for the purpose of nominating that neighborhood's candidate. The meetings are chaired by a local resident who was himself elected to chair the nominating meeting at a prior meeting of the neighborhood's residents. Nominations are made from the floor; any number of people may be nominated, so long as there are at least two nominees. The Communist Party is explicitly prohibited from making nominations or endorsing nominees, although individual party members may make nominations. The nominees are then discussed and voted upon by a show of hands. The nominee receiving a simple majority becomes the neighborhood's candidate for the delegate election. During the nominating process for the 1976 elections, 76.6% of the eligible voters attended these nominating meetings (Granma Weekly Review, 1976: 2).

Since each circumscription encompasses several neighborhoods, each delegate seat is contested by several candidates. Once candidates have been nominated by the neighborhoods, an election commission compiles their biographies and distributes them to all eligible voters in the circumscription. No other form of campaigning is permitted.

The first nationwide election of delegates to the municipal assemblies was conducted in 1976 with some 30,000 candidates contesting 10,725 seats. Voting was by direct secret ballot in closed voting booths. Although

voting is voluntary (it was compulsory before 1959), voter turnout was 95.2%, the highest in Cuban history. Given the multiplicity of candidates, in many circumscriptions no one received a majority of ballots cast, and runoff elections had to be held to fill about a quarter of the delegate posts. Turnout in the runoff election was 94.9% (Granma Weekly Review 1976b: 1; 1976c: 6).

The delegates' mission is to act as a "true vehicle of communication between the electorate and the municipal assemblies" (Constitution of the Organs of Peoples' Power; 1975: 22). Consequently, the Cubans have introduced a formal set of procedures to assure ongoing contact between delegates and the populace. Delegates are mandated to meet regularly with their constituents both to report on governmental operations and to listen to people's complaints and suggestions. The principal forum for such contacts are the "Assemblies for Rendering Accounts." These are mass meetings of the delegate's entire constituency which are held every three months. Delegates are required to report on the actions of the municipal assembly, report on their own performance in the assembly, and to solicit the people's grievances and proposals. All proposals are submitted to a vote, and if they are passed, the delegate is required to introduce them to the next meeting of the municipal assembly. Finally, the delegate must report back at the next Rendering of Accounts what the disposition of the proposal was. Delegates are also required to meet every three months with all the CDR committees in their circumscription to receive input from those organizations. Finally, delegates are required to set aside several hours every week as "Consulting Hours," during which time members of the community can meet with them on an individual basis.

Since People's Power has only been recently created, it is still

too early to evaluate the effectiveness of its institutions.

elite accountability and popular input to local policy-making. Results of the two-year pilot project in Matanzas, however, offer preliminary indications that these procedures are functioning fairly well. The meetings for "Rendering Accounts" were held regularly and attended by between 50 and 70% of the electorate. People also took advantage of the consulting hours by visiting their local representative, though estimates as to the extent of such contacting are unavailable (Bengelsdorf, 1976; Casal, 1975).

The creation of People's Power has significantly expanded the participatory opportunities of the Cuban population, and large numbers of people seem to be taking advantage of those opportunities. People's Power provides the first opportunity since 1959 for the Cuban people to vote for government officials, it provides several important new opportunities for communal activity (the nomination of candidates, the Rendering of Accounts assemblies, and the delegate meetings with the CDR), and it provides a formal procedure to facilitate individual contacting of delegates (consulting hours).

Table I: Mass Political Participation in Cuba: A Summary

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Percentage of eligible population participating</u>
I. Voting	
1. For People's Power Delegates	95%
II. Contacting Local Officials	
1. Formal contacting (consulting hours)	na
2. Informal contacting	na
III. Communal Activity	
1. Mass Organization membership	90 (est.)
2. Electing mass organization officials	60-85
3. Discussing mass organization work plans	80 (est.)
4. Discussing draft legislation	60-80
5. Nominating People's Power candidates	77
6. Meeting with People's Power Delegates (Assemblies for Rendering Accounts)	50-70
7. Nominating Communist Party members	na
IV. Supportive Activity	
1. Voluntary labor	60-75 (est.)
2. Community improvement programs	na
3. Socialist emulation programs	90 (est.)
V. Self-Management Activity	
1. Production assemblies	80-100
2. Management Councils	na
3. Work Councils	na

Conclusion: Participation and the Allocation of Public Goods

The available data (summarized in Table I) clearly indicates that participatory opportunities in Cuba have expanded greatly since 1970, and that the vast majority of Cubans participate in politics in a variety of ways. The effects of this participation on the allocation of public goods is more difficult to assess, but several preliminary conclusions seem warranted.

Supportive activity has been and continues to be an important political resource for the successful realization of the regime's policy goals. Numerous accomplishments in such fields as housing, education, and public health would have been unattainable without active participation by thousands of citizens.

Electoral, communal, and self-management activity differ from supportive activity in that they are aimed directly at influencing policy--i.e., influencing the distribution of public goods by the state. Such participation in Cuba is not merely symbolic or manipulated, though the scope of its effectiveness is clearly limited by the ideological and institutional context in which it occurs. Fundamental challenges to the regime, its leadership, or its basic policy orientations are proscribed, as are political structures through which people might organize to pose such challenges. Virtually all opportunities for legitimate participation are provided by regime sanctioned institutions. This does not mean that participation is therefore devoid of influence, but it does mean that popular influence is restricted to policy decisions about the allocation of particular public goods rather than the structure of the allocation process itself.

Since the institutions which structure participation in Cuba are organized on the Leninist principle of democratic centralism, there is also a significant difference between the effectiveness of popular influence at the local and national levels. Mass participation affords citizens considerable opportunity to affect local policy, local implementation of national policy, and even the composition of local elites. Above the local level, however, the role of the Communist Party becomes increasingly important, and policy at the national level is undoubtedly the least responsive to popular influence.

Even national policy is not wholly impervious to popular demands, however. The expansion of participatory opportunities since 1970 reflects the national leadership's desire to provide policy-makers with information concerning popular opinions and demands-- information which is essential to the formulation of realistic policy at the national level.

The evolution of political participation in revolutionary Cuba has been toward increasing levels of participation, and toward greater participation by the populace in influencing the formulation of public policy. For Cubans in accord with the socialist character of the revolution, the expansion of political participation has provided extensive and meaningful opportunities to influence the allocation of public goods.

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